

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15 and 17 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer and claims 3, 7, 18 and 20 have been amended. Claims 3, 4, 7, 8, and 18-21 are pending and under consideration. No new matter is included in this amendment.

Allowable Subject Matter:

At page 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicates that claims 3, 4, 7, 8, and 18-21 are objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 3, 4, 18 and 20 have been so rewritten in independent form, thus claims 3, 4, 7, 8 and 18-21 are deemed to be in allowable form.

The 35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejection:

At page 5 of the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicants' admitted prior art (FIGS. 1-2 and page 1 to page 4 [of the specification]) in view of U.S. Patent 5,673,152 to Yokota et al. All of the rejected claims have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, thus the rejection of claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15 and 17 is moot.

Conclusion:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 503333.

Respectfully submitted,

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